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**THE  
HASLER  
GALLERY**



***The  
Hasler  
Gallery***

***Museum of Domestic Design  
and Architecture  
2015***



# ***Acknowledgments***

## **North Finchley Town Team**

The North Finchley Town Team (NFTT) is an independent group of local residents and business people who work together on a voluntary basis to make North Finchley a better place to live.

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The Arts & Culture Unit  
[theartsandcultureunit.com](http://theartsandcultureunit.com)

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[www.thehaslergallery.org](http://www.thehaslergallery.org)

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The Hasler Gallery was part of a larger project funded by Barnet Council and the Mayor's Outer London Fund.

The Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture is part of Middlesex University  
[www.moda.mdx.ac.uk](http://www.moda.mdx.ac.uk)

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**Textile Designer**

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**Yemi Awosile 19**  
**Designer**

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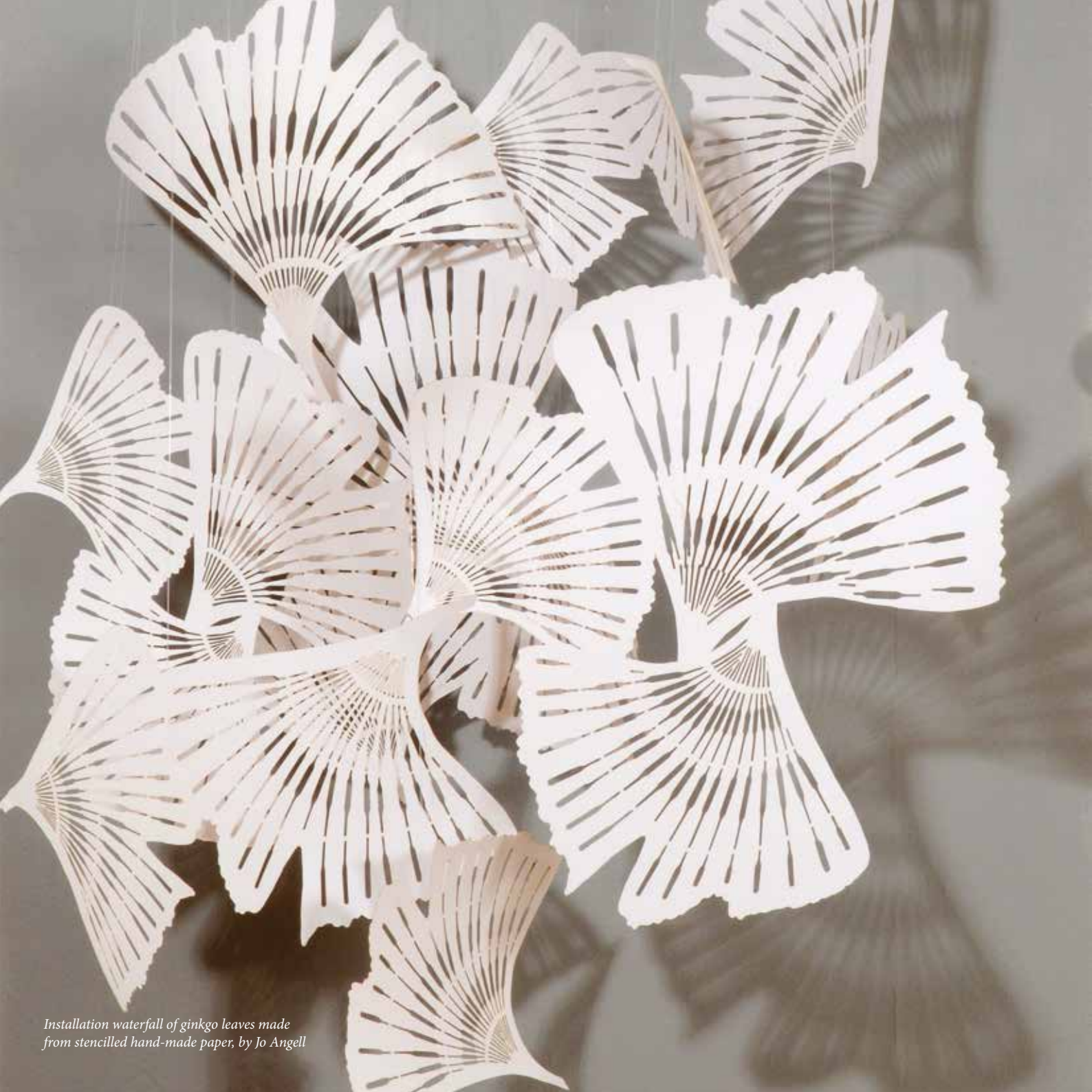
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*Installation waterfall of ginkgo leaves made  
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# About

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The Hasler Gallery project was a collaboration between the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (MoDA) and the North Finchley Town Team. It developed from a larger regeneration project in North Finchley High Street, after the area received some funding from the Mayor's Outer London Fund. Part of this funding was used for the redevelopment of three neglected shops in the Grand Arcade, one of which became The Hasler Gallery. The name was chosen in honour of the Charles Hasler collection of typography and printed ephemera, which is held at MoDA.

The Hasler Gallery project involved commissioning five creative practitioners to look at both the Museum's collections and at North Finchley, and see how those two things might come together in the creation of new bodies of art or design work. The five practitioners, Katie Horwich, Jo Angell, Yemi Awosile, Leigh Cameron and Aviva Leeman were all mid-career art professionals working in a range of media. They showed their work in the Hasler Gallery between the end of 2014 and early 2015.

MoDA is part of Middlesex University, and is located in Colindale, close to the University's Hendon campus. The Museum's collections



*The Grand Arcade*

are strong in material relating to the design and decoration of 'ordinary' homes from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, such as wallpapers and fabrics, rich with designs that the majority of people would have chosen to decorate their houses.

In addition to being of historic importance, MoDA's collections are also valuable as a source of visual inspiration for today's designers. The collections are well used by undergraduate students and others from Middlesex University and elsewhere, for whom the collections work not as a source of evidence of the past, but as fuel for their own creative practice.

## **The Museum's Collections**

MoDA's core collection is that of the Silver Studio, a commercial design practice that ran from 1880 to the early 1960s. The collection includes many thousands of wallpapers, textiles and designs for wallpapers and textiles, as well as other material relating to house building and home decorating from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century.

One of the museum's other collections is the Charles Hasler (1908-1992) collection of typography and printed ephemera. was a graphic designer who developed an eclectic collection including greetings cards, advertisements, labels and all manner of other typographic material and printed papers.

Both the Silver Studio Collection and the Charles Hasler Collection were the working collections of practising designers,





*The Grand Arcade: Aerial View of Arcade Space, showing Art-Deco inspired floor*

in both cases as part of a creative process, and kept for design reference. It is appropriate then, that the collections continue to be used for exactly this purpose. All the practitioners involved in the Hasler Gallery project found their initial encounter with MoDA's collections surprising, challenging, and a little overwhelming, because of the sheer number of items. All spoke about finding too many ideas, and of having to narrow their focus to make the process manageable. But they also valued the opportunity the Museum's collections offered to develop their work in new ways.

Often designers are used to working to a client's brief in which the outcomes of the work need to be carefully defined and agreed beforehand. In this project, in contrast, the brief was simply to use the Museum's collections and the North Finchley area in some way as the starting point for new work. The outcomes of these encounters with the Museum's collections were not prescribed – except by factors such as the time required to make things, and practicalities such as the space available to display them. This gave all of the practitioners the opportunity to take their work in unexpected directions, and

to explore ideas and processes without knowing exactly what the outcomes would be. As one of the artists, Leigh Cameron, explained, this way of working was not always comfortable:

“Normally I'm led by a client brief, so to go into my workshop and not know exactly what I was going to do was quite frightening.”

This book provides a useful case study, then, of this aspect of the creative process that we hope will encourage others to engage with the rich resources held in museum collections, either at MoDA or elsewhere. We hope to show that although challenging, the process of engaging with museum collections can be incredibly fruitful. For younger or less experienced makers, including students, looking at museum collections for inspiration can sometimes be bewildering. It is sometimes difficult for people to relate the wealth of new ideas on offer to ideas they want to explore in their own practice. With greater experience comes the ability to set boundaries on one's area of interest so as not to become overwhelmed by limitless possibility,

while still remaining open to new ideas. The practitioners in this project were able to do this, and experienced the excitement of making connections between things that interested them and aspects of their own practice. The result was a range of new work that, by playing with these connections, encourages us to look again at both the museum objects they used as inspiration and at the North Finchley area.

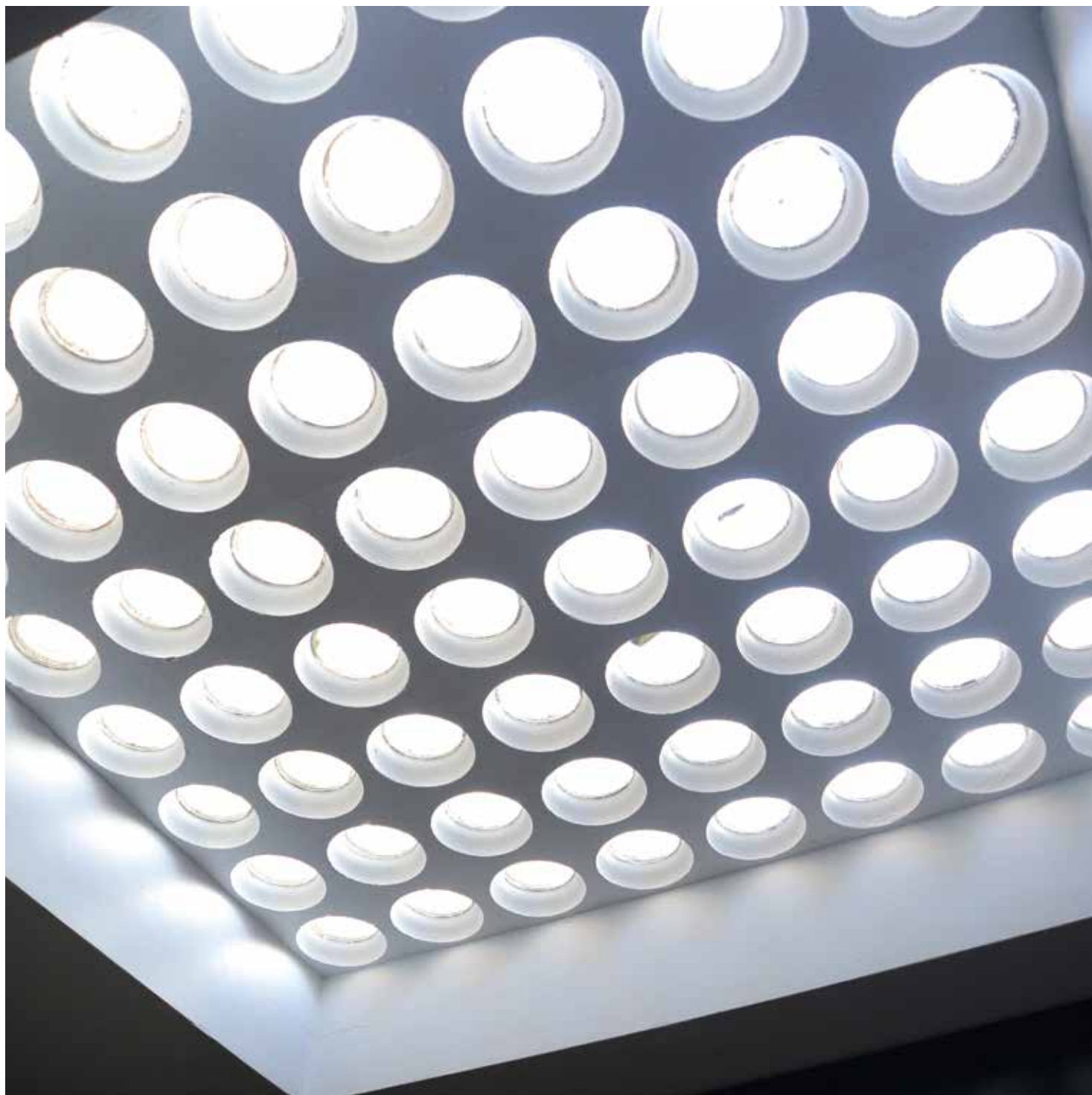
Four of the practitioners were paired up, so that their work was shown in joint exhibitions in The Hasler Gallery. Jo Angell and Katie Horwich showed together and coincidentally explored similar themes in their work, producing exciting resonances. Both were inspired by the Museum's collection of Japanese katagami stencils, but each took the idea of suburban exoticism in different directions. Similarly, Leigh Cameron (who works with concrete), and Yemi Awosile (a designer working mainly with textiles) showed their work together. Despite differences in the materials with which they work their show revealed similarities in the way both were inspired by colour. Finally Aviva Leeman's show linked ideas derived from

historic packaging and advertising with the fact that the Hasler Gallery was previously a retail space.

Many thanks to the Alice Cicolini, the North Finchley Town Team, and everyone else who participated for helping to make this a really exciting project.

Zoë Hendon  
Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture  
Middlesex University





*The Grand Arcade: Ceiling*

***Katie***

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***Horwich***

***Artist &***

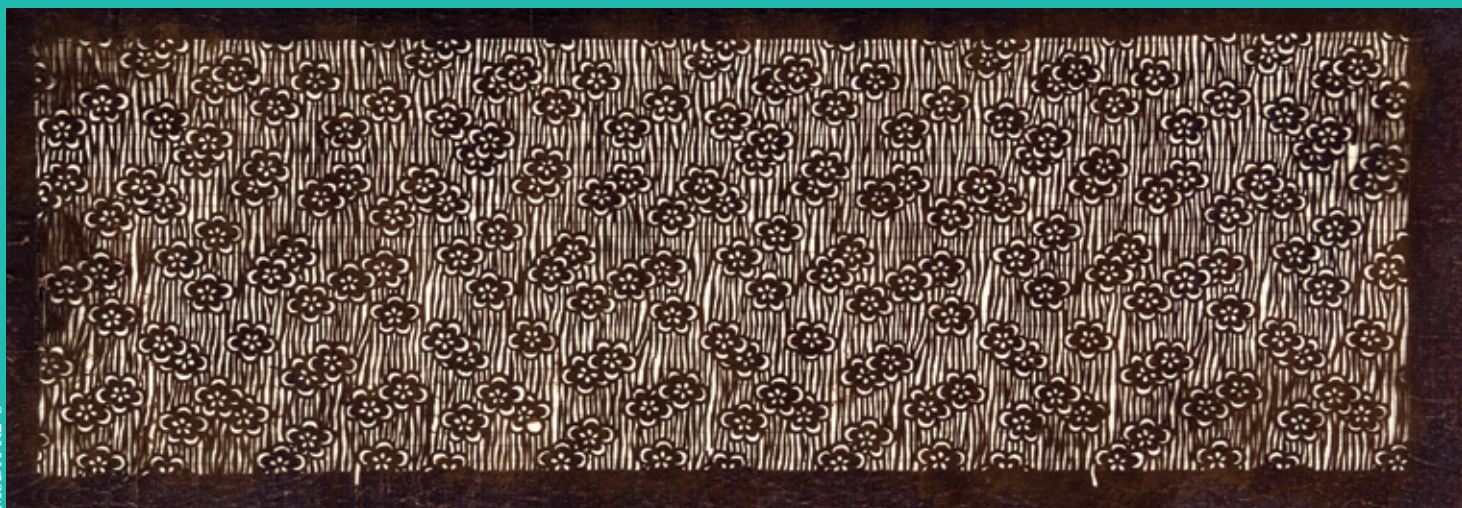
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***Illustrator***





*Artist and Illustrator Katie Horvich*



*Japanese katagami stencil, Silver Studio Collection*

When I was growing up in North Finchley, I think I was always looking for somewhere a bit more exciting to go. When I was a teenager I would always look out for the bright lights of the West End or Camden.

So as with anywhere you grow up, you can't wait to get out of there and find somewhere else. That's why this project was a mission for me to come back and notice things that I hadn't noticed before, especially within the Grand Arcade. When I was growing up here, where the Arts Depot is now, there used to be a big market and it was very, very windy. So this Arcade would be somewhere you would run to shelter from the wind. And it was, I suppose, a bit run down. I remember there being a toy shop, and somewhere you would go to get your watch battery fixed.

When I got to the MoDA collection, one thing that struck me were these katagami stencils [see above and page. 15]. I'd never seen anything like them before; I'd never even heard the word. And I was just really taken by these intricate, delicate and beautiful stencils, made of mulberry paper. So that's kind of what I took as my starting point.



*Wallpaper, around 1925  
Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture*





Wallpaper frieze, around 1905. Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture

And that's when I started to think about how you could transpose these motifs that have somehow found their way from Japan to the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture to North Finchley. It seemed like a long journey. But then I thought about how designers who worked for the Silver Studio often used motifs of plant life and flowers and birds and all kinds of exoticism.

So I set off exploring the area again with these new eyes, and it helped that it was a really scorching summer. I spent a lot of time sitting on kerbs, watching as the sun hit a palm tree and reflected on Waitrose. And so I did drawings of that sunlight hitting North Finchley, burying myself in local area and looking for something exotic in somewhere suburban.

In MoDA's collections there was also this navy, kind of midnight blue, wallpaper [see right]. It's a picture of a lady with a Japanese fan and she's standing on her

balcony, lit up by a silvery moon, all illustrated in a very 1920s way. And as I'm standing at the top of Nether Street looking down, there's a block of flats shielded by a cedar tree. And the way that the cedar tree is meeting the skeletons of the other trees on the other side - a monkey puzzle tree I think it was, and a weeping willow - felt reminiscent of this wallpaper and especially as the moon is played by a belisha beacon that is not flashing.

With all these drawings and paintings, I started again thinking about how the Grand Arcade was a sort of a wind wall to get away from this market. That's when I started thinking about how this kind of Japanese screen would have been put up to shield you from the wind. As a result of this, I placed all my drawings together and made these frames [see page overleaf], so that they formed a kind of concertina, to shield you from the wind.



Wallpaper, around 1920.  
Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture



*Katie Horwich's drawings of North Finchley, on display in the Hasler Gallery*





*Katie Horwich's 'exotic suburbia' painted screens, on display in the Hasler Gallery*



***Jo***  

---

***Angell***

***Textile***  

---

***Designer***



*Textile designer Jo Angell*



I felt very strongly that after seeing the Museum's collections and knowing that this project was for a new gallery in Finchley, that this work was for the people of Finchley. Therefore looking around that neighbourhood became a really important part of the process for me.

The first thing I found was some ginkgo trees in the high road, planted beside the gallery and I thought this is sort of a gift, because I've always loved them. This find enabled me to do more research about these trees in nature. And this, together with the Oriental link to the katagami stencils in MoDA's collections, just seemed right.

So I started to photograph the trees, draw the leaves, read about their remarkable historic claim to fame - in that they just seem to survive anywhere, particularly in polluted areas, which is probably why they were planted there.

From here I started to develop work based around the shapes of the leaves and the linear structures that you find on them. And I thought about how I could relate the intricately cut patterns of the katagami stencils to laser cutting, which is something I've worked with a lot.



*Ginkgo Tree on North Finchley High Road. Courtesy of Jo Angell.*

*Japanese katagami stencil, Silver Studio Collection*





DIOECIOUS -  
some M, some F

Ginkgo's tolerate  
pollution + confined  
root spaces.

Leaves are fan shaped with veins  
radiating out into the leaf blade.  
DICHOTOMOUS VENATION.

Ginkgo Biloba.

Also known as  
Maidenhair tree

~ a unique species of  
tree with no living relatives.

Jo Angell's sketch of a ginkgo tree's leaf





*Design for carpet, Silver Studio, 1933.*

At the same time as finding the ginkgo trees connection, I also found an Art Deco building in the High Road hidden behind Argos. It was an old department store called Owen & Owen that people in the neighbourhood remembered. It closed down in the 1970s.



*Detail of the old Owen and Owen building, now Argos, North Finchley High Road*

I also really liked some of the designs I found in MoDA's Silver Studio Collection; there was something really dynamic about the shapes. So I set about drawing and photographing this building in North Finchley with some of those designs in mind.



*Design for carpet, 1934, John Churton for the Silver Studio.*

I have always been really interested in the points where nature and urban life combine. So with this project, I really wanted to do a piece of work that was about this combination; the ginkgo tree on this busy high road that nobody really notices, but is keeping us breathing in this very congested area.



*A selection of Jo Angell's final pieces. Jo's work included a waterfall of ginkgo leaves made from stencilled handmade papers juxtaposed with a series of panelled textile designs inspired by the facade of the former Owen & Owen department store, using a distinctly Art Deco-inspired colour palette.*



***Yemi***

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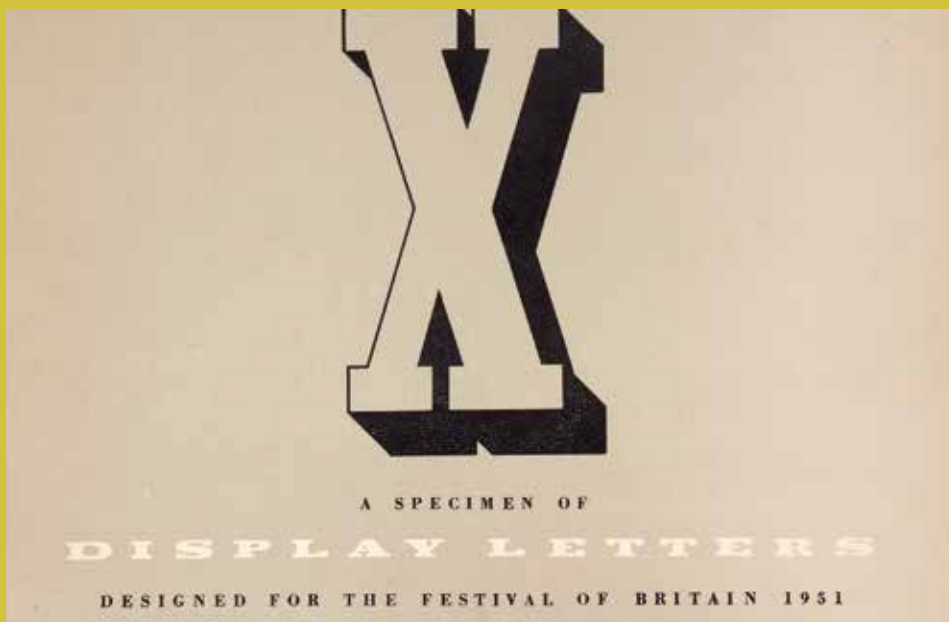
***Awosile***

***Designer***

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*Textile designer Yemi Awosile*



*A Specimen of Display Letters, designed by Charles Hasler for the Festival of Britain, 1951*

When I came to MoDA I intentionally decided to ignore the textile archive. I knew there was a really good textile archive there but I thought it would be a bit too obvious for me to look at it and it's given me a really good reason to go back! As a result, I decided to look at Charles Hasler and his archive, because he was a graphic designer with what I would consider an interesting approach to a creative practice.

So I looked at both Charles Hasler's professional and personal work. But I was also very interested in the everyday things that he collected. He almost obsessively collected things like envelopes, of which he had a large collection, dating from the 1960s. These were things that seem very ordinary and almost useless, but there was something really charming about that. He also had a fascination with all sorts of packaging design, so his collection included wine bottle labels, water bottle labels, cigarette packaging, and a lot of

invitations and exhibition posters. I really liked looking at these sorts of things as a framing device for understanding the design culture of the 1950s and 60s.

I was very interested in the process of design and I think that's very typical of how I work. Normally I don't make end products; I make materials for other people to use. So I guess this project was interesting for me to learn more about how I work as a designer and what attracts me.

I think I focussed more on the envelopes because I found the design very strange. They have these very intricate patterns but only on the inside, so you only see it when you open the envelope. And for me, this resembled some of these micro-patterns that you often see in textiles that you find everywhere, all over the place, in public space. So it was the connection between surface design and



*Specimen of Stephenson Blake typography collected by Charles Hasler*



*A selection of envelopes from the Charles Hasler Collection.*

pattern, and how I could relate that to textiles that I decided to focus on. These patterns are like having a nice lining in a jacket or a suit. They are just there but you don't really notice them, unless you take the time to look. And I found the same thing with the Grand Arcade itself, where if you're not familiar with the area you might not know it's there. But then maybe you're walking past and you might notice the crazy patterns on the floor and then look up. They are easy to overlook, because you're out and about, always in a rush. But there's always something to appreciate in anything.

Working with the archive helped to develop my practice because it not only slowed me down but also I had to spend a lot of time going through the archive and really being

careful about selecting the things that I thought would be useful to me.

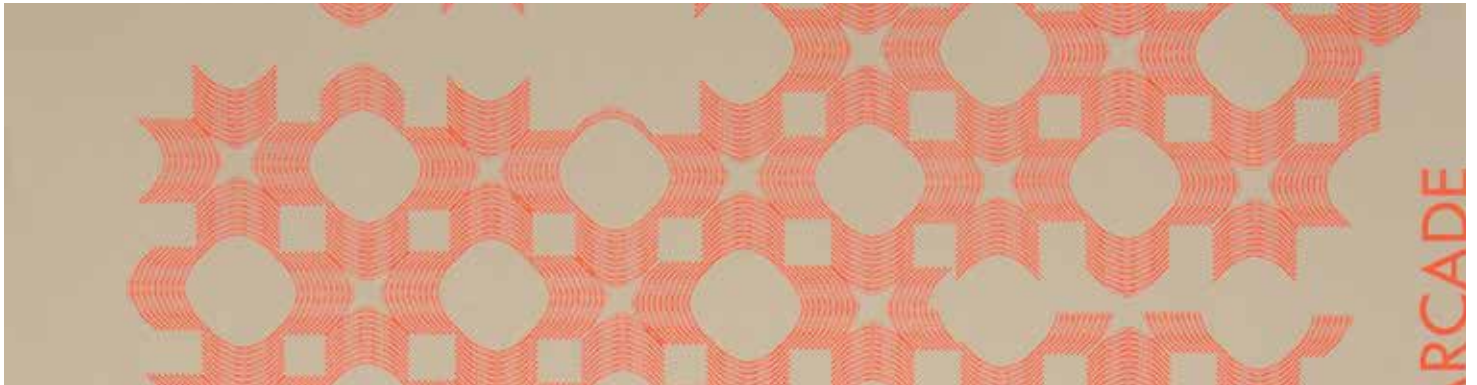
In the end I decided to make textiles and also some paper-based designs. I focussed on the use of sublimation printing on to textiles, which is quite a basic form of printing but I liked it because I could focus on really subtle mark-making. Because one of the things about Hasler's work was that he had strong attention to detail, so I wanted to pick up on that. I decided to look at riso printing; I wanted to look at the most basic form of printing and creating surface design, because I was looking at simple images for inspiration. One of the things I found interesting about the archive was that Hasler had a fascination with new developments with printing technology.

So I mixed up some dyes, and hand-painted them onto paper to create a colour palette that I was happy with and waited for that to dry; then transferred it onto fabric. I also work with knit, so I decided to make some really simple bags using knits. But I wanted to focus on the structure of the knits because they looked a lot like grids – again referencing some of the patterns I'd seen on the envelopes. I decided to focus on quite bright colours like the bright neons, because some of the images I'd looked at in the archive had a technicolour quality to them. There was a kind of heightened visual quality that you get with some of the inks from the archive and I wanted to try to recreate that.





Some of Yemi's Final Pieces, above left, above right and below.





***Leigh***

---

***Cameron***

***Concrete***

---

***Designer***





*Concrete Designer Leigh Cameron*



My background is in Japanese cabinet making, but I retrained as a concrete designer. I'm a consultant to the concrete industry as well as a designer-maker: I'm often asked to do things like develop a specific mix for a high density x-ray shield. And all of those different elements feed into my own work.

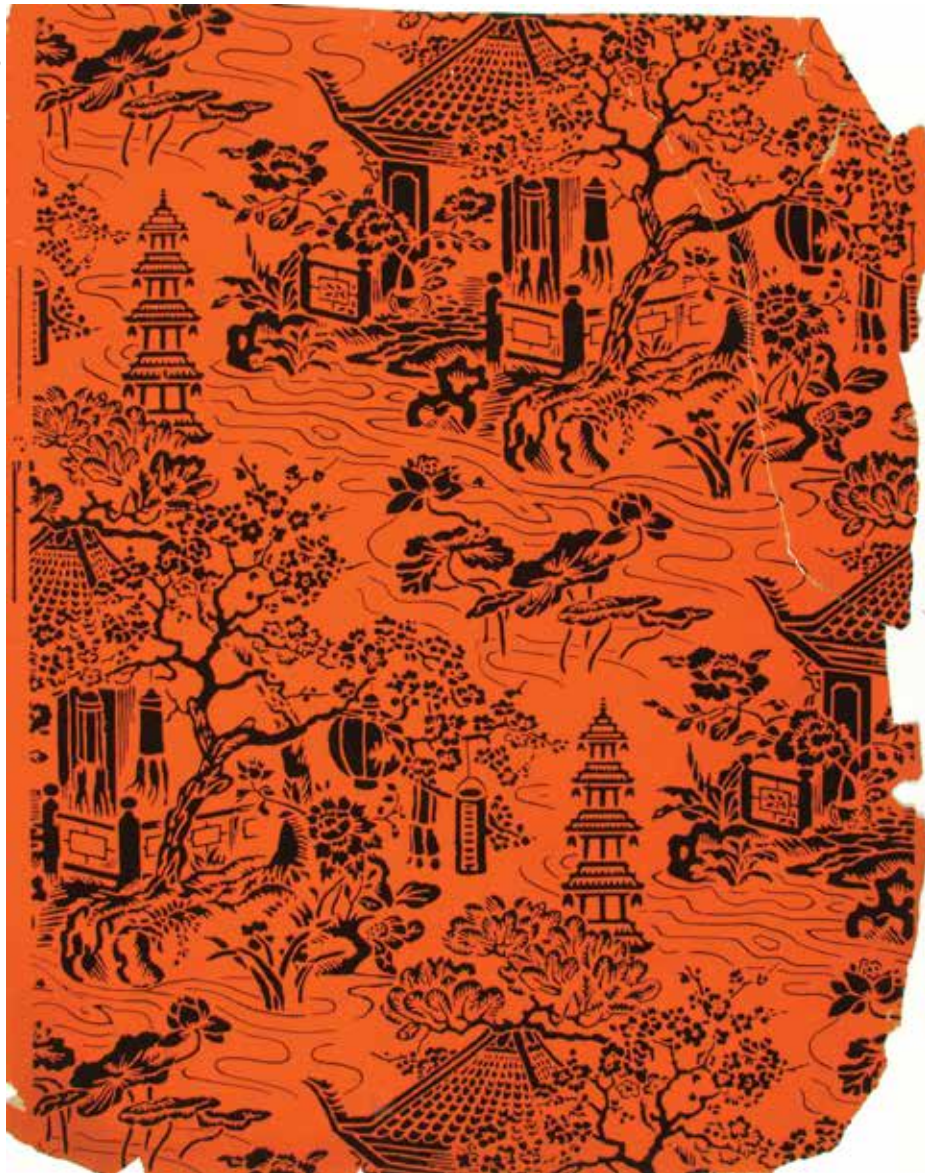
When I visited the Museum it was very difficult because I was astounded by the enormity of the collection. There was so much in there that I very quickly had to rationalise what I looked at. I started by looking at the Japanese katagami stencils, and I was also interested in the Charles Hasler collection of typography and printed ephemera.

But I gradually began to explore colour and pigment, and then the sparks started to fly - I could see close links between colour in the Museum's collection and my own work.

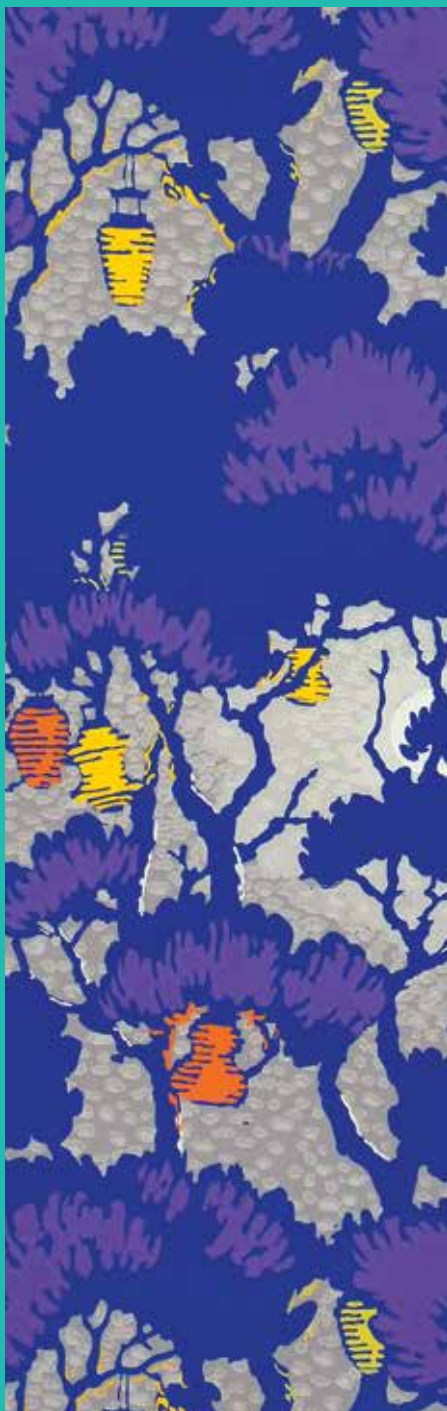
I started thinking about how repetition was created in the wallpapers, and I went away and tried to explore that without boundaries but in line with my original proposal. It was about how a pattern can be created - I wanted to explore the same principles but through process. What I wanted to do was explore with no set brief and no fixed outcome; to use process to create a thing, not to have a set end-point in mind.

Normally I'm led by a client brief, so to go into my workshop and not know exactly what I was going to do was quite frightening. But I had to get past the fear and let different things happen. It was an opportunity to challenge myself outside of everyday parameters.

MoDA SW810



*Chinoiserie wallpaper, 1920, Jeffrey & Co.*



*Sanderson wallpaper, 1925*



*Leigh Cameron's experiments with colour, above and below.*







*One of Leigh's final pieces*



*Final pieces by Leigh Cameron*

I was surprised by the end results. The vessels became a kind of tessellation of colour over a time period. It was the pattern of time that synced with influences from the museum collection, but looking at it from a completely different perspective. So colour was repeated on each bowl, spun as a pattern. But it was not 'pattern'

as I've previously understood it, but rather it became the pattern of time, each day, adding a different colour at a specific time to build up layers of colour.

This project has opened up whole new avenues of explorations, as well as some new sales and new commissions, all of which

means I am producing lots of new work.

For an artist or practitioner this project was a fantastic opportunity, and it was great to have been part of it. To spend ten days in your workshop when you don't know what you are going to come up with was a marvellous opportunity.

***Aviva***

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***Leeman***

***Artist/***

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***Designer***





Artist/Designer Aviva Leeman

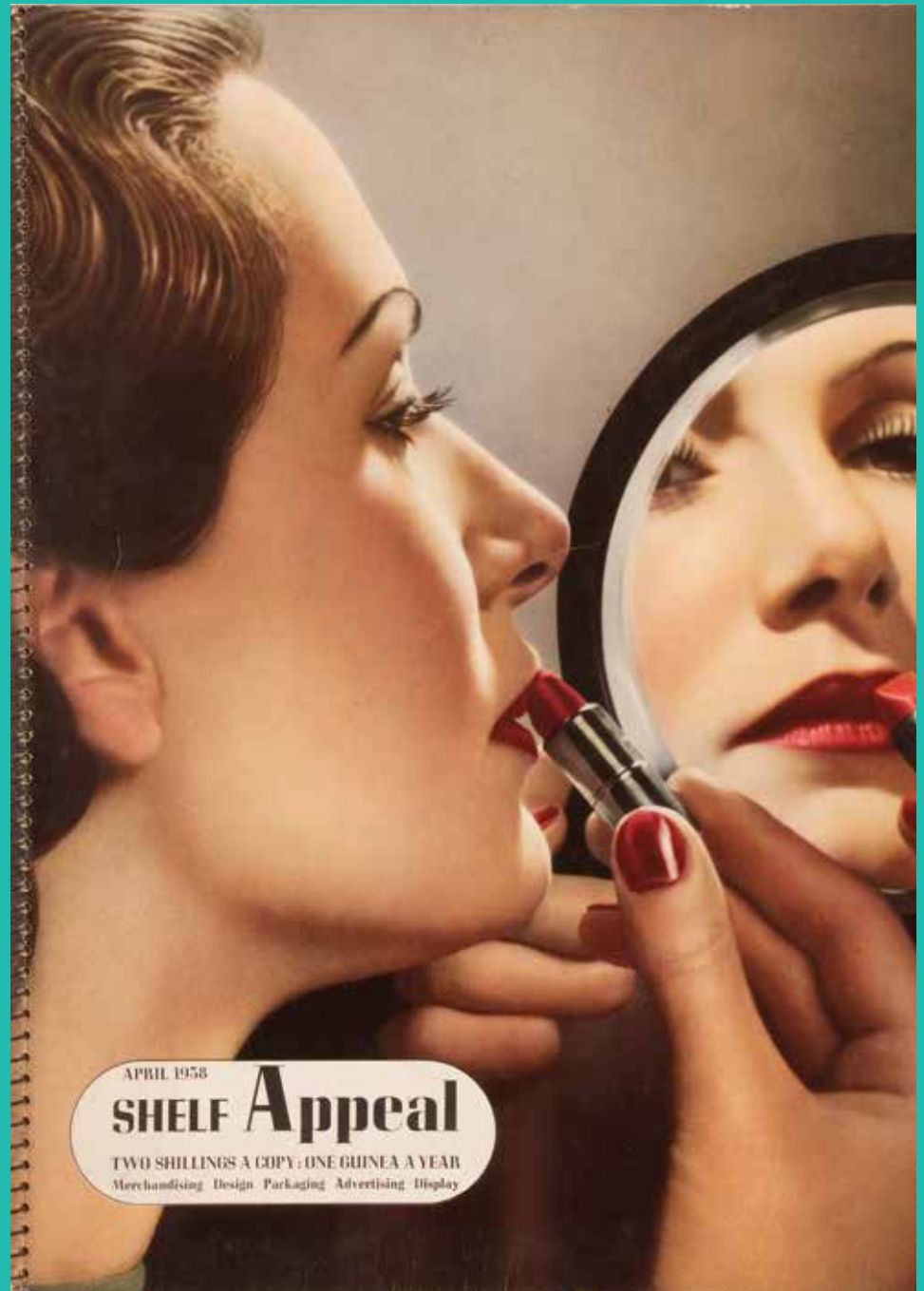
I'm an artist-designer. I trained in graphic design but always did courses called 'communication design'. I like artists who cross boundaries. And although I like to have a brief like a designer, even if self-defined, I'd describe myself as an artist.

I was interested in Charles Hasler first of all because of my background in graphic design, plus the fact that I'm a bit of a hoarder. I like that Hasler kept things that other people would overlook. I used to talk about my work in that way, that it was about making visible things that other people might not notice. Also there's a definite nostalgia trip with the things he amassed. I work with letterpress, and the Charles Hasler Collection has some really lovely examples of it, such as Christmas cards and correspondence notes. It's nice to hear his 'voice' coming through.

I looked at the *Shelf Appeal* magazines. They were trade journal publications for creators of packaging materials in the 1930s, aimed at designers and manufacturers. The covers are very beautiful but the text itself is very dry although the images are amazing and the language used was quite interesting.

And it did also occur to me that part of my research was about the shop window. I loved that The Hasler Gallery had this big plate glass window, and I think initially I was going to 'print' a shop - just recreate a shop that didn't sell anything but was printed. However it was beyond the realms of what I could do in the time. But I did love the window, and some of my research was about how illuminated windows changed things; the advent of the move from the high street to shopping centres to retail parks has changed things again. So it was interesting seeing how much people don't notice shop windows these days, because at the time of the *Shelf Appeal*

MoDA CH5/2/5/5



*Shelf Appeal Magazine, April 1938*





Advertisement for Birdseye Peas, date unknown  
 Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture. By kind permission of the estates of Jan Le Witt and George Him

articles, that was the real talking point. We don't do that any more - we are on the way to somewhere else a lot of the time, and we probably pay more attention to things on screens. So I was pleased to be able to make something physical, tactile, in 'real life' that people could react and respond to.

The show ended up having a kind of 'gathering' of female faces from adverts from 1930s magazines, and they're a kind of community because none of those women ever knew each other or were ever put together in that way. But it's really interesting to look at them all together because visually, and I suppose conceptually, there are some similarities and differences and I'm sure there are some quite strong feminist messages in there, although that's not my focus as an artist.

And the other piece was really about the language that was used within retail, between designers, manufacturers and retailers; and then the language that was used to project towards the consumer - I mean the visual language. What I really liked was the idealism and the manifesto-like sound of a lot of the language that was used in the trade advertising because I think today we're very cynical about advertising and people trying to sell us stuff. However at the time the Grand Arcade was built in the 1930s, it was a real turning point for packaging and for the High Street and for shops. So things like food and way it was sold changed radically. Previously there would be a counter and you would ask the shopkeeper for something specific and he would show you what he had. But with the advent of packaging, things could be transported differently and presented differently, and customers could feel things for themselves: they had a different kind of choice.





Aviva Leeman's Final Piece *We Women All Agree*, in The Hasler Gallery.



Detail of Aviva Leeman's Final Piece *We Women All Agree*, in The Hasler Gallery

HONEST COMMODITIES WITH A GLOSS AND A SHINE

THE ELEVATION OF THE QUOTIDIAN TO THE MEANINGFUL

WHAT YOU BUY NOTHING MORE NOTHING LESS

*Avica Leeman's Final Piece, The Silent Salesman.*

# *End Notes*

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*Some of The Hasler Gallery Project members: Curator Zoe Hendon, Artist and Illustrator Katie Horwich, Textile Designer Jo Angell, North Finchley Town Team Manager Alice Ciccolini, and The Hasler Gallery Communications Officer Aishleen Lester*

This project, involving a collaboration between the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (MoDA) and the North Finchley Town Team (NFTT), was a small part of a wider regeneration project funded by the Mayor's Outer London Fund and the London Borough of Barnet.

MoDA and the NFTT commissioned five artists and enabled them to show their work in the Hasler Gallery in the Grand Arcade,

between the end of 2014 and the beginning of 2015. The Museum's involvement in the project has now ended, but the North Finchley Town Team hope to continue to run Hasler Gallery as a space for local creative work.

For the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture this was an exciting opportunity to commission new work inspired by the Museum's collections, and to show it in an unusual location. The site itself, the Hasler

Gallery, was crucial to the success of the project and proved to be catalyst for some of the work's development. As this book shows, all of the artists made connections between what they saw in the Museum, and the space in which they were going to show their work.

This project reminds us of the value of museum collections not just as a record of the past, but as the starting point for innovation in the present and change for the future.



# ***Japanese Katagami in the Silver Studio Collection***

Several of the practitioners referred to MoDA's collection of katagami stencils. But what exactly are they?

The Silver Studio was a company that produced designs for wallpapers and textiles between 1880 and the 1960s. Today MoDA's Silver Studio Collection contains many hundreds of examples of wallpapers and textiles as well as original designs. It also contains many of the things that the designers who worked for the Silver Studio accumulated to use as inspiration, including around four hundred Japanese stencil plates or katagami dating from around the 1870s.

Katagami stencils are a Japanese method of applying designs to fabric, primarily for kimonos. They are made of mulberry paper cut to form intricate patterns, including geometric shapes, animals and plant forms. Most were designed to form patterns that repeated along the whole length of the cloth.

We don't know how the stencils now in the Silver Studio Collection were acquired, but it is possible that the founder of the Studio, Arthur Silver, bought them in the 1880s for use as design reference. Western travellers to Japan at the time were becoming fascinated with this example



MoDA K2-8



MoDA K2-32

*Two examples of the over four hundred katagami held by MoDA.*

of Japanese craft, and they imported katagami to Europe in great numbers. Many Victorian artists and designers became avid collectors of these stencils, impressed by the stylization of the motifs

and the technical brilliance of the cutting. For the same reasons the katagami stencils continue to be some of the most popular items in MoDA's collections, providing an ongoing source of inspiration to visitors today.



# ***Further Reading***

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Jane Audas and Zoë Hendon, *Charles Hasler Sends His Greetings: The Ephemera Collection of a Mid-Century Designer*, Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, Middlesex University, 2015.

Felicity Ford, *Sonic Wallpapers*, Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, Middlesex University, 2012.

Zoë Hendon, *The Silver Studio and the Art of Japan*, Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, Middlesex University, 2014.

Keren Protheroe, *Petal Power: Floral Fashion and Women Designers at the Silver Studio, 1910-1940*, Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, Middlesex University, 2011.

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Mark Turner [et al.], *Art Nouveau Designs from the Silver Studio Collection, 1885-1910*, Middlesex Polytechnic, London, 1986.

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# ***Visiting the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture***

MoDA's collections are available by appointment in the Study Room at our Collections Centre in Beaufort Park.

You will probably find it helpful to look at our website [www.moda.mdx.ac.uk](http://www.moda.mdx.ac.uk) before arranging your visit to get an idea of what the collection contains.

Our Study Room can accommodate group visits of up to 12 people, and we are happy to offer a number of sessions for larger parties. Please contact us for more information and to discuss your requirements by emailing

[moda@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:moda@mdx.ac.uk) or calling 020 8411 5244.

You do not have to be a student or researcher, or be attached to an academic institution. MoDA's collections are available to everyone, whether you are an academic, student or interested member of the public.

We also offer 'In Conversation afternoons' for those who would like a general introduction to the Museum's collection rather than an appointment to see specific items. Please see the MoDA website for details, or join the mailing list to receive regular updates.

## ***Contact Details***

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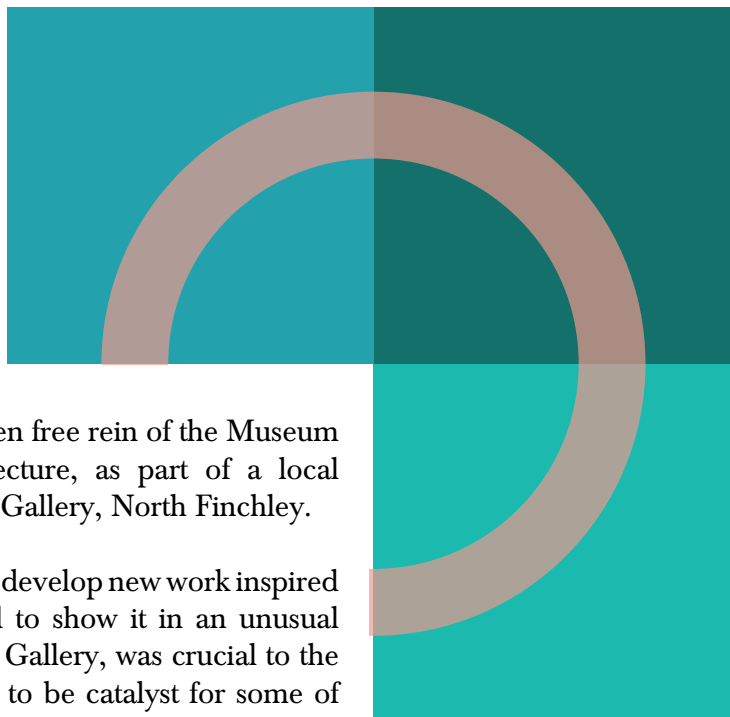


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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.  
ISBN 978-0-9565340-6-4





Five artists and designers were given free rein of the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture, as part of a local regeneration project in the Hasler Gallery, North Finchley.

This was an exciting opportunity to develop new work inspired by the Museum's collections, and to show it in an unusual location. The site itself, the Hasler Gallery, was crucial to the success of the project and proved to be catalyst for some of the work's development. As this book shows, all of the artists made connections between what they saw in the Museum and the space in which they showed their work.

This project reminds us of the value of museum collections not just as a record of the past, but as the starting point for innovation in the present and change for the future.

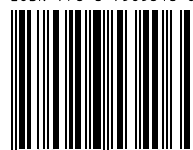


Museum of Domestic  
Design & Architecture



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ISBN 978-0-9565340-6-4



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